BRITISH COLUMBIA The Best Place on Earth | Ministry of Education

EDUCATION REPORT

Issue No. 34

In The News

Record Education Funding Continues to Support Students

Ecole Robb Road Gets Seismic Overhaul

New School Buses for a Greener Environment

Report Shows Class Sizes Reduced Across the Province

Delta Strongstart BC Centres Open for Preschoolers

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Links

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Message from Minister Shirley Bond

Honourable Shirley Bond, Minister of Education

The holidays are upon us, and everyone involved in B.C.'s education system deserves to spend some time relaxing with friends and family.

Everyone in the education system is working hard year round and the proof is in the fact that B.C. students continue to perform at a world-class level. Earlier this month, our Grade Four's ranked among the best in the world in The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, or PIRLS. Also, fifteen-year-old B.C. students ranked among the best in the world in reading and science in the Programme for International Student Assessment, or PISA.

We've shared a fast-paced year of new initiatives that will help improve student achievement. Recent efforts include our provincial literacy strategy ReadNow BC for readers of all ages, tuition-free adult basic education for lifelong learners, StrongStart BC early learning centres for preschoolers, and mandated physical activity for all K-12 students.

In the New Year, I hope we can build on ReadNow BC and other developments like achievement contracts, district literacy plans, and the partnerships possible with First Nations following historic new legislation that recognizes First Nations' jurisdiction over education on their lands.

In the meantime, I wish you a relaxing holiday with loved ones, and I thank you for all of your hard work and help over the past 12 months. Please take a moment to view my holiday video message.

Province Empowers First Nations

The Province has introduced historic legislation that recognizes participating First Nations' jurisdiction over education on First Nations' land in British Columbia. This legislation enables boards of education and independent schools to enter into education agreements with participating First Nations. It supports First Nations student achievement and lifelong learning.
Read more.

The Esquimalt Singers and Dancers perform a traditional dance for ministers Bond and de Jong, Aboriginal leaders, and Aboriginal students, Victoria, November 22, 2007.

HOT TOPIC

This year's record $4.345 billion in operating grants for school districts will recognize alternative education students and reflect an adjustment to the funding formula for students in grades 10 to 12.

Operating grants are increasing this year by $116 million, despite a province-wide enrolment decline of over 4,800 students this year. All districts will receive the same or increased funding over last year's operating grants.

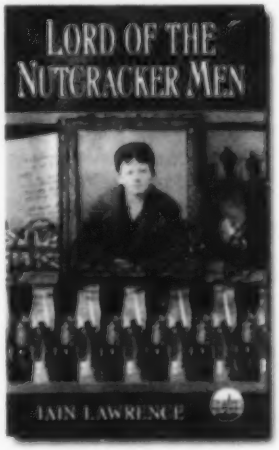
To increase equity and fairness in the funding formula, districts will now receive funding for the specific number of classes that students take. This decreases the cost to districts when students take more than the standard 8 courses, and it also provides greater funding flexibility for distance learning options.

The exception to this is with alternative education students, who may require extra support but do not always take a full course load. Recognizing this unique situation the ministry will, for the first time ever, fund alternative education students as full-time equivalents.

In the spring our government committed $4.345 billion dollars to Boards of Education and every dollar is in fact flowing to school districts.

Reading Corner

It's late October 1914 and 10-year-old Johnny Briggs is living with an aunt after his overly enthusiastic father enlisted and his mother moved to a factory town to assist in the war effort. For two months, Johnny receives letters that increasingly reveal the reality of war, but, even in this terrible time, people find moments of joy and generosity, like the Christmas Truce, which saw British and German soldiers sing carols and cross no-man's land to exchange gifts. This book is suitable for students in grades 8-10.



Lord of the Nutcracker Men
Iain Lawrence